

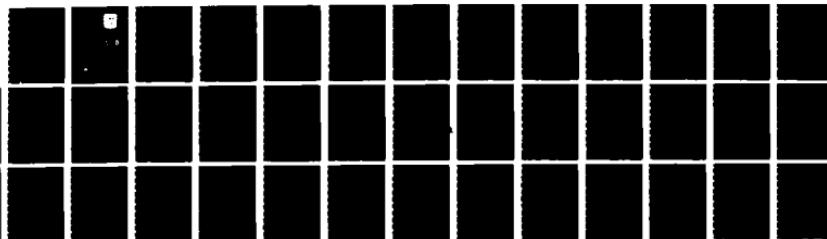
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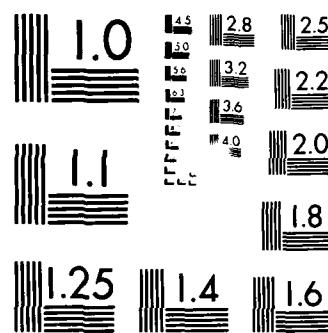
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TERRORISM - A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

BY

STEPHEN R. GWIN

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USAWC MILITARY STUDIES PROGRAM PAPER

TERROISM - A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

An Individual Essay

by

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21 March 1987

ABSTRACT

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TERRORISM -- A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

This article provides a general assessment of terrorism trends in the first half of the 1980s and extrapolates indications of what might be anticipated over the rest of the decade and into the 1990s. Specific focus is placed on the availability and likely application of high technology by terrorists in future attacks. A pragmatic, problem solving approach is used in defining terrorism in order to isolate and clarify the problem and place it in a global perspective. An assessment of the strategic significance of terrorism, that is, how much concern, i.e., resource allocation, does the threat justify, viewing the spectrum of terrorism from a 100% point of total impact. Sociopsychological, economic, and political, as well as the level of violence, clearly demonstrates cause for great concern. In addressing any type of violent conflict, it is important to investigate the character of the enemy, especially the leaders. For knowing your enemy is a prerequisite for defeating him.

The general trend of global terrorism through the first half of the 1980s has been escalatory, but the United States, for a variety of reasons, has been spared extensive episodes

of domestic terrorism. That is not to say that America and Americans are not the favorite target of terrorists overseas, for they most certainly are. Some aspects of the trend of the 80s suggest an end to this "sanctuary" status for the continental US. With the advent of state supported terrorism and terrorist access to high technology, possibly including weapons of mass destruction, this sanctuary may be terminated soon and with an alarmingly violent punctuation.

THE PROBLEM

Definition, of course, is a basic component of all creative problem solving methodologies. Terrorism, however, presents a unique challenge to any writer or problem solver attempting to articulate a precise definition. A plethora of articles, studies, books, and public documents have been written on terrorism, each offering it's own definition. Almost every government department, as well as each of the military services, has produced an "official definition" of terrorism. These definitions vary greatly, but all embrace a common theme relating to acts of violence perpetrated to obtain political, ideological, or religious goals. That theme is certainly valid regarding terrorism; however, it is also an accurate definition of most acts of law. Typical of these operational definitions is the one used by the Reagan Administration.

The unlawful use or threat of violence against persons or property to further political or social objectives. It is generally intended to intimidate or coerce a government, individuals or

groups to modify their behavior or policies."¹

Such definitions may be adequate for general application by an individual organization in day to day dealings with terrorism, but they overlook essential elements of effective problem solving, i.e., the abstraction or isolation of the problem. If the world community is to condemn and act effectively against terrorism, then it must have a clear and consistent definition which will distinguish the act of terrorism from "legitimate" violence regardless of the international perspective. One approach to this would be to use target selection as the specific criteria for distinguishing acts of terrorism. When the targets or recipients of the violence are in no way instrumental to, or have influence over, the entities (government, power, group associated with the issues for which the act is perpetrated, then the episode would be distinguished as a terrorist act. The passengers on a hijacked plane usually have no connection with or influence over the issues concerning the terrorist, they are merely unwitting instruments in the hijacker's plot to gain world attention.

This "target criterion" definition excludes from the terrorism category such events as the 1983 bombing of the Marine barracks in Beirut and attacks on embassies in contested areas. Clearly such attacks are despicable and abhorrent to most of the civilized world, but a distinction can be made between these events and attacks on uninvolved, random victims. Events like the Marine barracks and embassy

attacks fit the criteria of "non-international armed conflicts" addressed under the accords of the Geneva Conventions.

Protocol II, added to the Conventions in 1977, was specifically intended to provide protection for the victims of non-international conflicts. In 1973, The International Committee of the Red Cross initially drafted Protocol II on the basis of several concepts including:

- that it should apply to all conflicts which do not take place between states, including wars of national liberation.
- that a relatively high level of protection should be guaranteed, not only to the civilian population and persons in the power of another party to the conflict but also to combatants, by limiting the use of methods and means of combat.
- that these guarantees should be granted to both sides of such conflicts on a basis of complete equality.¹²

Article 4, Part II of Protocol II provides for fundamental guarantees that:

1. All persons who do not take a direct part or who have ceased to take part in hostilities, whether or not their liberty has been restricted, are entitled to respect for their person, honour and convictions and religious practices. They shall in all circumstances be treated humanely, without any adverse distinction. It is prohibited to order that there shall be no survivors.
2. without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing, the following acts against the persons referred to in para. 1 are and shall remain prohibited at any time and in any place whatsoever:
 - (a) violence to the life, health and physical or mental well-being of persons, in particular murder as well as cruel treatment such as torture, mutilation or any form of corporal punishment.

- (b) collective punishments.
- (c) taking of hostages.
- (d) acts of terrorism.
- (e) outrages upon personal dignity, in particular humiliating and degrading treatment, rape, enforced prostitution and any form of indecent assault.
- (f) slavery and the slave trade in all their forms.
- (g) pillage.
- (h) threats to commit any of the foregoing acts./3

Organizations which conduct attacks such as the Marine barracks bombing also may be involved in aircraft hijackings and other "terrorist" atrocities. But it is not the actors but the acts of terrorism that we are attempting to isolate through definition. Although these actors have clearly demonstrated their contempt for the principles of humanity and compassion on which the Geneva conventions are based, a condemnation of their acts under the rules of the Conventions will, at least, preclude any claim to legitimacy by the perpetrators.

The terrorism problem will not be solved unilaterally by the US or any other government. Any success in the war against terrorism will be realized through the coordinated efforts of the entire World Community, based on a common understanding of what constitutes a terrorist act. The "target criterion" definition would provide the requisite common international focus on the problem and reduce the

prospects for definitional disputes. Its acceptance could counter the divergent perspectives on terrorism at large in the world community; in its absence, we are hostage to the refrain commonly heard in Europe, Latin America, and the Middle East that "One man's freedom fighter is another man's terrorist."

This international variable in conceptualizing terrorism was graphically illustrated in a discussion between Secretary of State George Shultz and Yugoslavian Foreign Minister Raif Dizdarevic following the October 1985 hijacking of the cruise ship "Achille Lauro." Shultz referred to the hijacking as a case of "terrorist murder." Dizdarevic responded that "Yugoslavia distinguishes between terrorism and the struggle against colonialism, aggression and racism" and that "when speaking of terrorism one must also view the causes that lead to it."⁴

To be broadly accepted, the ultimate terrorism definition for the international community must clearly distinguish between freedom fighters and terrorists. The "target criterion" method would go a long way toward achieving this. The actions of freedom fighters are directed against the forces or institutions of the government or regime they are resisting. The actions of terrorist are perpetrated against uninvolved, randomly selected persons or property, with the intent of bringing attention to a "cause" and pressuring or coercing the government or power they are opposing. An assumption

inherent to this definitional process is that a freedom fighter may sometimes commit an act of terrorism and, conversely, a terrorist may sometimes function as a legitimate freedom fighter. Again, it is the individual acts that must be specifically addressed just as the heroic performance of a soldier in battle should have no effect on the judicial processing of charges against the same individual for raping a refugee woman after the battle.

A logical extension of the definition of a problem is an assessment of its importance. In other words, how significant is the threat of terrorism. Some analysts and government officials are of the opinion that the western world is overreacting to terrorism. These individuals like to play a numbers game and point to the relatively small number of casualties resulting from terrorist events compared to, say, automobile accidents in the same period of time. Another school of thought portrays terrorists in the image of spoiled children, kicking their heels on the floor when they don't get their way. Like parents who refuse to take responsibility, these pop psychologists of the counterterrorism community suggest that if we ignore terrorism it will magically go away.

In a superficial analysis of the terrorism problem, the casualty numbers alone certainly do not indicate a strategic threat, and it might be said that a mother's grief is no more or less intense for a child lost in an automobile accident than for a child lost to a terrorist bomb. We

must, however, look beyond the numbers to establish precisely the impact of terrorism and assess the threat. Issues that must be addressed include: the effect of terrorism on public morale or the sociopsychological effect, the effect on domestic and international political arenas, the economic effect and the resulting problems relative to world order. In the opinion of many political analysts, it was terrorism which terminated the Carter presidency, and Mr. Reagan's political position has certainly suffered significantly from terrorism related events. If a handful of fanatics can use terrorism to influence the political process in the United States, Britain, or for that matter any of the world's nations, then the threat takes on sinister dimensions.

THE ENEMY

Once the international community establishes an accepted definition of terrorism, the next phase in attacking the problem should be source identification. Frequently the source of terrorism is defined in causal terms like poverty, oppression, and regional political or religious turbulence. However, again applying the pragmatic approach of creative problem solving, the source of terrorism is best defined as the terrorist. After all, the objective is to attack the problem of terrorism and if the only way to achieve that objective is to solve poverty and religious and political turbulence, then we can close the

book and go home. The terrorist is the source of the problem, and he uses appealing pretents to construct his facade of legitimacy.

An important element of any war fighting strategy is knowing as much as possible about the enemy. This, of course, includes the usual intelligence information on equipment, capabilities, etc.; but more importantly, it includes the psychological profile of the enemy. His values, motivations, and priorities. In the past some of the more notorious terrorist figures have been romanticized in the image of a "James Bond." Counterterrorism professionals and psychologists who have studied the background and actions of these self appointed cause chasers take issue with this description. Who are the Abu Nidals and Carlos, how do they think, what are their values and priorities? These are the questions we need to answer about our enemy, the terrorists. If we are to be victorious in this war they have forced upon us. A study of individual terrorists who have risen to positions of leadership in the terrorist "community" reveals a variety of cultural backgrounds, politics, personalities, and motivations. However, there are also some striking commonalities. The terrorist biggies tend not to be, as one might think, from a background of poverty and oppression, striking out at the source of their misery.

Clearly, situations such as the Palestinian refugee camps are breeding grounds for hate and fanaticism, providing an environment conducive to fostering terrorist

mentalities. Many of the pawns of terrorism, the little guys who blow themselves up with their victims, come from this type of environment, but not their leaders. The major figures in terrorism, the commanders and orchestrators of the international terror network, frequently emerge from a background of wealth and prestige. Giangiacomo Feltrinelli, the father of the Italian Red Brigade, was born to one of Italy's great families and endowed with tremendous wealth. 6 George Habash, a major coordinator of international terrorist activity and original exporter of Palestinian terrorism to Europe, is a physician of substantial resources, 6 and the infamous Carlos, whose father (in spite of being a devout Marxist) has acquired a massive fortune in real estate, enjoys a flamboyant existence on the international cocktail circuit.¹⁷

As previously stated, a terrorist may sometimes function as a freedom fighter; however, these commandants of terror seem to have a proclivity for the abhorrent. They may present their actions in a cloak of political and ideological rhetoric, but closer examination suggests elements of a "revolution for the sake of revolution" syndrome. That is to say, they don't pursue so much the revolution per se, but use the vehicle of the revolution to display their own special perverse skills.

CARLOS

An examination of the profile of the infamous terrorist

Ilich Ramirez Sanchez (alias: Carlos) will serve to illustrate some of the foregoing assessments. Born in Venezuela in 1949 to a wealthy rancher and attorney, Carlos spent most of his childhood traveling around South America and the Caribbean with his mother. He was provided a tutor while traveling and studied the languages of the countries visited. After beginning his formal education at the Colegio Fermin Torrc, Carlos became involved in student demonstrations in support of the Venezuelan Communist Party, which had been banned by the Venezuelan government for supporting anti-government guerrillas. After graduation, he began an "advanced" education program at Camp Martanzas in Havana, where he received political indoctrination and training in the art of subversion at a school operated under Fidel Castro's secret service and directed by the KGB. This was just the beginning of his graduate work in terrorism. He later completed his "Doctorate of Terror" at the Patrice Lumumba University in Moscow, a KGB operated institution for training young revolutionaries from Third World nations. From this point forward Carlos's precise travels and activities became less clear. It is known that he was expelled from the Soviet Union for "disreputable morals" and "provocative activities." It should be noted, however, that expulsion is one of the standard KGB methods for inserting an agent into the outer world.¹⁸

After leaving the Soviet Union Carlos took a guided tour of the terror circuit through East Germany to West Europe.

and the Middle East. He met with and was briefed on the activities of most of the major organizations of the terror network, including the Baader-Meinhof gang and the PFLP (Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine). Since then Carlos appears to have evolved as a major coordinator for the global terror network. He has personally directed numerous terrorist acts, including the kidnapping of the OPEC Ministers in Vienna in December 1975. As the OPEC episode unfolded, the world was given a more precise profile of the motivations and psychological makeup of members of the terror cult. The OPEC kidnapping was orchestrated by Carlos and the Baader-Meinhof gang, but in the hours immediately following the seizure of the cartel ministers it became very clear that Carlos was completely in charge. In the initial seizure, Carlos killed Yousef Ismaili, a member of the Libyan delegation, by shooting him five times, one of the bullets passing through Ismaili's body and wounding a member of the Kuwaiti delegation. At almost the same instant Gabriele Koecher-Tiedemann, a 23-year-old member of the Baader-Meinhof gang, killed two others, shooting one in the face and the other in the back of the head, execution style. Gabriele was the same young lady who had previously been arrested and sentenced to eight years in prison for a 1972 Berlin bank robbery. Unfortunately, in March 1975, she had been released and flown to South Yemen as part of the ransom paid for the release of Peter Lorenz, West Berlin's Christian Democratic party leader, who had been kidnapped by

a Baader-Meinhof spin-off group known as the Second of June Movement.

Carlos identified his group as "The Art of the Arab Revolution" and presented his demands in the typical rhetoric expounded by various factions of the Arab Rejection Front, including the dismantlement of the Zionist aggressor state of Israel. History records the culmination of the episode with the commandeered airliner and flight around the Mediterranean eventually terminating in Algeria, where the terrorists were granted political asylum. As the events unfolded, Austrian officials, as well as the hostages themselves, were exposed to the reality of terrorism and the true character of its perpetrators. During the tense and lengthy hours following the attack, Austrian Chancellor Bruno Kreisky, who negotiated "via a mediator" with Carlos, considered several factors in his decision to cooperate with the terrorist. In a meeting with ambassadors from all the OPEC nations, Kreisky observed that "Carlos was very dangerous," and that "the fact that they have already killed members from delegations of countries allied to the Palestinians convinces me that they would not hesitate to kill all the hostages if we frustrated their plan." When asked how the terrorists were acting, he responded, "They are laughing about killing the people, they are very calm and determined." A few weeks after the event, Kreisky reflected that "there is a very deep brutality about these people." According to the hostages, this on the flight

over the Mediterranean, Carlos handed out autographs and bragged of other terrorist exploits and the fact that he had developed the OPEC attack by himself to secure existence of a Palestinian state. Valentín Hernández Acosta, the Venezuelan oil minister, said "he acted like a movie star."/9

While Carlos is probably one of the more flamboyant of the contemporary terrorists, he displays characteristics and motivations typical of the other commandants of the trade. One finds the salient features of the OPEC attack to be illustrative of the terrorist syndrome: a blatant disregard for human life, free floating aggression, disdain for world order, and the KGB connection. The Soviet terrorist connection is a subject worthy of a complete study by itself. Suffice it to say, that terrorists leaders on the left side of the political spectrum have, almost without exception, received training and indoctrination in the Soviet Union or Soviet surrogate nations under the direction of the KGB. There are, of course, numerous right-wing terrorist organizations whose members reflect similar characteristics and syndromes. However, the right-wing terrorist groups are not as effective or well organized as the left-wing factions, and this appears to be mostly a matter of training and resources.

TRENDS AND EXTRAPOLATIONS

Trends in terrorism over the first half of the 1980s

provide some consistent patterns which may indicate what we can expect through the remainder of this decade and into the 1990s. Generally the trends point to continued escalation into the foreseeable future, with increases in the number, types, and lethality of terrorist incidents. There is evidence that the geographical reach of various terrorist factions, especially Mideast groups, will increase as will their callousness in targeting random civilian victims. A prime motivation will continue to be access to mass media exposure to attract as much public opinion as possible to the terrorists' "cause" and to bring maximum pressure and coercion on targeted governments. This general escalation in global terrorism will probably include an increase in terrorism in the US, by domestic groups as well as foreign ones. The growing lethality of terrorist attacks appears to be a product of a bolder, more aggressive psychology on the part of the perpetrators, a better organized terror network, and the increased application of technology in the attacks. These trends, plus several other factors addressed later in this article point to an increasing danger of an eventual nuclear attack by terrorists.

Arguments persist throughout the counterterrorism community on the nature of the nuclear terrorism threat. Some analysts believe that the public revulsion to a nuclear attack, even of an extremely low yield, could be counterproductive to the terrorists' objective and therefore will probably never happen. This same school argues that

the resources expended by a terrorist group to obtain and employ a nuclear device could be applied to produce numerous conventional attacks, which would be more attractive to the terrorist planners.

Others argue that the demonstrated psychology of many terrorist factions, especially those emanating from religious fanaticism, shows little capacity for intellectualizing about public sentiments, rather they seek to attract public attention and disrupt world order. From that perspective it appears likely that a nuclear explosion would be seen by the terrorist as a bigger, more destructive bang, attracting more public attention and providing the terrorist with an enhanced power of "persuasion." A study by the Rand Corporation considered dynamite terrorism of the late 19th century as a historical analogy for extrapolating possibilities relative to future nuclear terrorism. 10 The study presented some interesting perspectives on terrorists' mindsets regarding the use of "super-explosives":

- Super explosives represent "power to the people" for use against the state. The state uses raw power against the people--so they should do likewise in return. In this view, man's historical progress is based ultimately on the peoples' resort to the latest instruments of violence.
- Super explosives may represent scientific power. According to the highest form of revolutionary terror should rely on the most advanced science and technology of the time.
- Super explosive terrorism may represent a moral form of power. Whereas conventional weapons abuse conventional prejudices, new high technology weapons elevate violence above the level of common humanity.

- * Super-explosives may be considered a humane form of power. By viewing the system as inhumane and immoral, terrorists claim that the more quickly it is destroyed the better for humanity--even though some people are killed or harmed in the process.
- * Super-explosives may endow the terrorist with a mystical, magical kind of power, useful for charming the audience and perhaps creating an apocalyptic breakthrough to a new millennium.

As sophisticated as modern intelligence systems may be, they won't put us in the terrorist's mind. Nor will comprehensive trend analysis or psychological profile studies tell us to what extreme a terrorist will go. However, with the information available on the motives and psychology of terrorists, combined with the general trends toward more numerous, more sophisticated, more violent attacks, it would be foolish to operate on any premise other than a very real possibility of eventual nuclear terrorism.

The evidence suggests that terrorists would use a nuclear device to threaten, intimidate, and pressure governments to do their bidding, and would detonate the device, if for no other reason than to demonstrate the capability so that future threats would be effective. According to studies sponsored by the Nuclear Control Institute (NCI), the probability of nuclear terrorist is increasing due to a confluence of factors including

- * the growing incidence, sophistication and lethality of conventional forms of terrorism, often to increase shock value.
- * apparent evidence of state support, even sponsorship, of terrorist groups.

- * the storing and deploying of nuclear weapons in areas of intense terrorist activity;
- * an increasing number of potential targets in civil nuclear programs -- in particular facilities and shipments in which plutonium and uranium, in forms suitable for use in weapons, are present;
- * potential black and gray markets in nuclear equipment and materials.

The NCI study was fairly specific in addressing the prospect of nuclear terrorism:

Given the widespread deployment of tactical nuclear weapons, the continuing spread of weapons usable forms of nuclear materials, and the availability of know-how applicable to assembling fission weapons, the interest of terrorist, and as the case may be their sponsors, in acquiring nuclear weapons, it (nuclear terrorism) should be regarded as technically, politically and psychologically plausible.

Paradoxically, the increased proficiency in securing public facilities with sophisticated perimeter barricades, is negating the effectiveness of conventional bombs, thus creating additional incentive for the terrorist to go nuclear.

Again, the statistics on international terrorism for the first half of the decade point clearly, however regrettably, to continued escalation for the foreseeable future. Through the first few years of the 1980s the number of international terrorist incidents stayed fairly steady around the 500 mark. In early 1983, however, the Islamic Jihad bombing of the American Embassy in Beirut, Lebanon, killing 63, signaled the beginning of a change in international

terrorism. That change appears to include not only an increase in the number and violence of events, but also a trend for exporting terrorism "out of theater," especially from the Middle East.

Europe is currently the primary recipient of Mideast-exported terrorism. For the four year period from 1980 through 1983, Mideast-generated incidents in West Europe ran consistently around 40 a year. In 1984, Mideast-exported terrorist events were up over 20 percent in Western Europe, and in 1985 the number of such events almost doubled the annual rate for the first four years of the decade. The European states hit hardest by Mideast-originated terror were Cyprus, Greece, Italy, and the United Kingdom. Cyprus suffered the largest increase, with 20 Mideast-generated incidents in 1984 and 1985, after only five in the 1980 - 1984 period. Greece had 26 incidents in the two year period of 1984 - 1985, compared to a total of eleven during the preceding four years. The United Kingdom had an extremely bad year in 1984, with 13 incidents after an annual high of only three and a total of eight for the preceding four years. Even neutralist Switzerland has no immunity from Mideast-exported terror, with five episodes in 1985 after only two in the preceding five years. 12

According to the US State Department, there are a number of reasons for this increase in Mideast terrorist activity in Western Europe: 13

- * Increased counterterrorism efforts by West European governments have resulted in the apprehension and imprisonment of several dozen Middle Eastern terrorists. Consequently, terrorist organizations, including the Abu Nidal Group, are attacking West European targets seeking to pressure those governments into releasing their jailed comrades.
- * The accessibility of West European countries due to limited travel restrictions and the open society provides more vulnerable targets than the secured facilities of the Middle East.
- * Attacks in Europe gain worldwide publicity, whereas the standard level of violence in many Middle East countries serves to mask anything but the most spectacular terrorist events.
- * West European countries host exile groups and former leaders that are attractive targets for regimes, such as those in Libya and Iran, who don't hesitate to use terrorist tactics to silence vocal opponents.

The United States has enjoyed something of a sanctuary from terrorism through the first half of the 1980s, but global trends suggest that this reprieve may soon come to an end. The trend of terrorism exportation carries special significance regarding the prospects for future terrorism in the United States. All of the previously mentioned reasons for the export of terrorism from the Middle East to West Europe also apply to the US. After all, what country in the world is more accessible and open than the US? Where can a terrorist be more assured of complete access to the media with "up close and personal" exposure to 300 million people at 15-minute intervals through the day? And, most important, what country is more representative of the philosophical and political themes to which terrorist

subcultures are most likely to be at odds? Although domestic terrorism has appeared to be on the decline through the first half of the decade, down from 42 events in 1981 to seven in 1985, the trend reversed in 1986 with 17 terrorist episodes, plus 23 planned attacks which were interdicted by the FBI.¹⁴

Over the past decade US citizens have been the preferred target for terrorist attacks abroad. The trends suggest that in the near future we Americans will not have to travel overseas to retain this dubious distinction.

THE TECHNOLOGICAL THREAT

The phrase "technological terrorism" usually engenders images of a nuclear, chemical, or biological terrorist incident. However, the application or potential application of technology by terrorists is not limited to methods of mass destruction. Technology is providing the modern terrorist with improved capabilities relative to mobility, organization, and effectiveness, as well as an enhanced capacity for conventional destruction. Technology readily applicable to the terrorist "mission" includes the new synthetics (plastics and ceramics) from which some firearms are being manufactured. These weapons are extremely light, and have only a few metal components; consequently, they are not easily detected by X-ray screening or metal detectors, in airports or elsewhere. The Austrian-manufactured Glock 17 is a 9mm handgun (holding 17 rounds) produced from one of

these composite materials. The Glock can be purchased on the open market in Europe and the US./15

The machine gun is certainly not a recent innovation, but each new generation of firearms includes a group of machine pistols that are lighter, smaller (i.e. more concealable), and more lethal. All of these enhancements are directly applicable to the terrorist's needs. The famous Israeli produced Uzi machine pistol is still considered an effective weapon, but it is now taking a back seat to some of the newer-generation lightweight, rapid-firing guns. Many of the latter are produced with synthetics for the purpose of minimizing weight, but also inadvertently accommodating the terrorist's need for weapons that are difficult to detect. The West German Heckler & Koch 9mm Parabellum VP70 automatic pistol is typical of this generation of weapons. It is the size of a standard sidearm and can be set to fire semiautomatically, in three shot bursts, or automatically at 37 rounds per second. The VP70 incorporates the synthetics technology and only weighs 1.6 kg with the stock attached./16 Colt Firearms Corporation, under contract by the US Air Force to develop an "armgun," recently produced a weapon referred to as the "Lightweight Rifle/ Submachine Gun." It is about the size of a man's forearm and offers firepower approaching that of the M-16 assault rifle./17 Special forces and commando troops are attracted to these powerful lightweight weapons because they are very effective when the action is "up close and

personal." Terrorists, however, are impressed with the "stealth" features of the weapons, as well as their efficiency for rapid, indiscriminate killing. Other high tech equipment available to the terrorist includes laser aiming scopes, night vision gear, pocket size communications devices, and a plethora of electronic tracking and monitoring devices.

Another type of weapons technology available to terrorists and useful for causing high-casualty incidents is the numerous portable missile systems becoming common stock on the shelves of the world's arms markets. A number of these systems, such as the US "Red Eye" and the British "Bacupipe," man-portable and shoulder-fired, have accurate infrared or optical guidance systems and represent a severe threat to aircraft approaching and departing airports. According to Allen Seddon of the FBI's Terrorism Section, terrorist groups are believed to be in possession of these missiles and "we've just been lucky" so far that an airliner has not been shot down. Technology has a multiplier effect on the impact of terrorism; the terrorist becomes harder to preempt and more lethal in the attack. Both of these aspects make the terrorist more confident, which in turn makes him bolder and more aggressive, thus even more lethal.

All of the foregoing seems horrific enough, but it pales in comparison with the prospect of terrorist employment of mass destruction weapons. This term "mass destruction weapons" includes chemical and biological agents as well as

atomic devices. Given the premise that a terrorist organization predisposed to the use of weapons of mass destruction has a choice between the three, it is likely he would choose the atomic weapon over the chemical or biological. With the chemical or biological weapons the terrorist would have numerous variables to contend with, not the least of which is the risk of self contamination. Production, storage and handling of chemical and biological agents present special problems. The dispersal method, climatic conditions, wind, and many other factors not under the control of the terrorist can degrade the effectiveness of a chemical or biological agent, even to the extent of totally negating its effect.

With a nuclear weapon, even if it is a crude homemade device, there are only two real variables: will it detonate, and if so how big a yield will it produce? In the process of building a device there would be concern over handling the fissile material. But, assuming the material is stolen or provided by a sponsoring state, it will probably come to the terrorist in an appropriate container with necessary handling gear. Variables such as surrounding structures and wind conditions will affect the ultimate result of a nuclear explosion, but from the terrorist's perspective, the effect of these variables is negligible since the minimal result from a nuclear explosion in a populated area would be many magnitudes that of a conventional explosion.

The thought of nuclear terrorism is so abhorrent that many, including some officials responsible for public safety, just don't think about it. Fortunately, some government agencies are beginning to study the problem and at least address some preliminary contingency planning. The increasing likelihood of a terrorist group obtaining and using an atomic device was discussed earlier, but it is important to emphasize that analysis of trends and developments throughout the history of terrorism suggest that it may be only a matter of time until the world is subjected to a nuclear terrorist attack. More than one task force studying the problem has concluded that the first atomic attack since Nagasaki will more than likely be by a terrorist group instead of a nation.

Some action has been taken toward preparing for the detection and interdiction of nuclear terrorism, including the creation of the Department of Energy's Nuclear Emergency Search Team. Considering the potential of an atomic detonation in a population center, however, leaves one wondering if enough is being done. Once the threat is assessed, is there a point of diminishing returns for contingency planning and allocation of resources to training and preparing emergency personnel and facilities for an eventual atomic attack by terrorists? The following general scenario is provided to demonstrate the physical effects of a nuclear terrorist attack in a metropolitan area.

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

On a sunny day in 1982, in Washington D.C., a nondescript van similar to the vehicles frequently used by the street vendors in the city, was driving slowly down Constitution Avenue; suddenly it veered over the curb and across the grassy area surrounding the Washington Monument. The vehicle skidded to a stop at the base of the monument and the driver stepped out declaring that he had a bomb in the van. The ensuing siege ended several hours later when a sharpshooter killed the driver. No bomb was found in the van and the incident went down as just another iconoclasting out his frustrations on the world. In assessing the actions surrounding that event, however, one is drawn to do some "what if" thinking. What if there had been a bomb and another terrorist in the van, or a bomb rigged with an automatic release triggering device? What if the bomb was atomic? Then, how could the story have ended? A car of that type, with about a fifteen-ton load capacity, is adequate for carrying a crude homemade nuclear device capable of producing a yield in the tens of kilotons. Is but let's not even grant the terrorist that level of competence. Let's just consider the prospect of a fifteen-kiloton nuclear detonation at the base of the Washington Monument.

The initial blast and radiation of the explosion would immediately kill everyone within 700 yards of the monument. As far as a 1000 yards away from the explosion, few exposed people would survive the effects of the blast; those who did

would die of radiation sickness within a few weeks. Buildings within 500 yards of the blast would be at least severely damaged if not totally destroyed, with most of the occupants killed or seriously injured. This would include portions of the Department of Agriculture, the National Museum of History and Technology, the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, the Department of Commerce, and a variety of less significant buildings. Many buildings out to 1,000 yards from ground zero would receive serious damage, with many of the occupants killed or injured. The White House, Internal Revenue Service, Justice Department, and Smithsonian Institution would be included in this radius. Deaths and injuries from the initial effects of the explosion could be realized as far out as two miles from the monument. 19

These damage and casualty estimates are intentionally presented in a general context and are on the conservative side of the radii published in government documents on nuclear explosion effects. The delayed effects of fallout and radiation contamination are not addressed because of unpredictable variables. One can estimate, however, that if a typical wind condition exists at the time of the explosion, a fallout pattern would extend to the east, beyond the Capitol building well into the Maryland suburbs. The immediate results would be catastrophic, even without considering the long-term effects. Anyone who has ever walked or driven along the Mall between the Capitol and the

washington Monument on a business day can guess that the incident described above could easily produce casualties in the hundreds of thousands, during tourist season the figure would probably double.

SUMMARY

The world's experiences with terrorism over the last decade, the worst in recorded history, may have only been a small sample of what is in store for the next decade or so, especially given a more imaginative application of technology by tomorrow's terrorists. The threat is real, and astonishing in its scope. Whether it is categorized as strategic or nonstrategic is only semantic dithering. Contemporary terrorists have demonstrated a proclivity for more violent, shock-intensive attacks with no apparent ceiling on the amount of destruction rendered. The prospects include the eventual crossing of the nuclear threshold.

The eradication of terrorism is not a realistic objective. There will always be psychotic fanatics whose distorted value system will inspire them to violence against whatever persons or property may be accessible. A realistic objective, however, is the disruption of organized terrorism and the disassembly of its worldwide structure. This objective can be accomplished, but only if the international community bands together to orchestrate a well-resourced, unified, dynamic, proactive as apposed to reactive attack against the world terror network and the

nations that sponsor or manipulate it. Louis Rene Beres, professor of political science at Purdue University, and a prolific writer on the subject of nuclear terrorism, addresses the need for a plan 20

We need a plan, one that joins the elements of sound scholarship with the summoning and mastery of vision of atomic annihilation. With such a plan, we can begin to take the first critical steps back from a future that glows as a burning hallucination. The plan is complex. It cannot be limited to the sorts of "quick fix" physical security measures that are now in fashion. Rather, it must also include measures directed toward affecting the behavior of terrorists. And all strategies of counternuclear terrorism, technological and behavioral, need to be applied internationally. The plan has a critical dependence upon a strengthened tapestry of international treaties and agreements directed at nonproliferation and superpower arms control. In the final analysis, the prevention of nuclear terrorism will require states to move beyond the precarious dynamics of realpolitik to a new world politics of globalism. Planetization, a new consciousness of unity and relatedness between states, is integral to all possibilities for ensuring patterns of safety.

Although Dr. Beres specifically addresses nuclear terrorist, the principles set forth and the general theme of his plan are equally applicable to all levels of terrorism. His term "planetization" is most apropos in reflecting the ultimate requirement for a reordering of the global political framework to eventually win in the war against terrorism.

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